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GO WILD IN MIAMI
EXPLORE THE CITY'S NATURAL BEAUTY ON A JET-BOAT TOUR {page 10}

BERLIN PASSION
VISIT CATHEDRALS BY DAY, TECHNO BARS BY NIGHT {page 9}

EXTRA DAY
AMY ADAMS ROM-COM CELEBRATES MAGIC OF LEAP YEAR {page 7}

WINNIPEG metro®

Wednesday, February 29, 2012
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News worth sharing.

SHANE GIBSON/METRO

▶ Mayor Sam Katz, left, and finance committee chair Scott Fielding speak to reporters after the city's executive policy committee tabled its preliminary operating budget for 2012 on Tuesday afternoon at city hall.

Property taxes to rise by 3.5%

Increase will add $14.8M to budget, help offset escalating costs

Winnipeggers will see their property taxes rise for the first time in more than a decade.

The city's executive policy committee has tabled a budget that proposes a 3.5 per cent property-tax increase for Winnipeg homeowners. On an average $235,000 home, that means an increase of about $48-$60 a year.

This is the first a property-tax hike Winnipeg has seen in 14 years.

"We're trying to keep up with costs that go up," said Mayor Sam Katz after the budget was tabled. "A 14-year property-tax freeze is really historic.... If you were in any other major city in Western Canada, your taxes have dramatically gone up over the same time period."

The increase will add $14.8 million to the current $900 million budget, which finance committee chair Coun. Scott Fielding said would be used to add 50 more police officers and 20 additional firefighters to the city's payroll, resurface or repair 33 city blocks and add nearly $1 million of new money for community-centre repairs, among other initiatives.

The budget also calls for an increase in some user fees, including a jump in the base cost of ambulance trips to $479 from $383.

Coun. Jenny Gerbasi expressed concerns about the budget, saying all of council — not just EPC — should have been involved in its creation, and noted Katz lambasted a two per cent property-tax hike proposed by failed mayoral candidate Judy Wasylycia-Leis during the 2010 civic election.

"I know we have to raise money, but let's be honest about it," she said. "This should have been honestly portrayed in the last election."

The budget now moves to public works committee on March 5. From there, it will move through the city's property and protection committees and to the city's executive policy committee on March 13, where 'Peggers can register to speak as delegations.

Council as a whole is scheduled to vote on the finalized budget March 20.

SHANE GIBSON

Swift reaction via tweets

- **@L_L_M:** Was there ever really a 'tax freeze'? The value of my house went up so much they didn't need to raise taxes! #winnipeg
- **@erik_thomas:** Great job Sam Katz, you fiscal conservative, you! #mbpoli #winnipeg #MORETAXES
- **@JeffMyall:** @metrowinnipeg as long as the $$ goes towards improving city services/getting things done and not fattening councilor wallets i'm all for it
- **@SwimBikeRun_RMc:** @metrowinnipeg Simple. Less $ left in wallet to spend around Winnipeg.
- **@BrotherCrothers:** Katz increases user fees, frontage levy, and now a 3.5% property taxes increase, and everyone said Judy was nuts? #Winnipeg #YouVoted4Him

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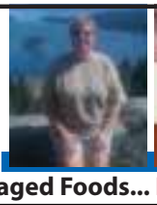

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1 news

A Lady Gaga appearance is spurring pressure on Harvard to confer posthumous degrees on students expelled for being gay or perceived as gay. Scan code for story.

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On the web at metronews.ca

Every four years, the universe plays a game of catch-up by adding a bonus day. Leap years explained at metronews.ca/video

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Suicide pact foiled at airports

A woman in Vancouver and a Winnipeg man's plans to hurt each other were thwarted by police on Monday.

B.C. RCMP said they were called to Vancouver airport where a 33-year-old woman had been taken into custody. There, they learned the woman was travelling to Winnipeg to meet a man, 27, she met online — with the intention of the two people harming each other.

RCMP said they were then told the man was waiting for her outside the Winnipeg airport in a vehicle with a number of hazardous chemicals.

Winnipeg Police were sent to the airport to find the man. He was taken into custody at a traffic stop at about 11 p.m. without incident. Sealed chemicals were found in the car but were deemed safe by the Winnipeg Fire Department HAZMAT team.

The chemicals were not intended to be used to harm anyone else.

Police said the woman was not from Canada but had flown into Vancouver to eventually make her way to Winnipeg

Both the man and the woman were taken into custody and given support. Police said no charges are pending.

ELISHA DACEY

METRO FILE

▶ Traffic outside James A. Richardson International Airport was shut down for about 15 minutes.

Blood. Stains

▶ Police tape hangs on bloodied stairs behind a home in the 600 block of Langside Street Tuesday. Two men were arrested after a man was stabbed and a woman assaulted at a party early Tuesday morning. Both of the injured are in stable condition and the investigation continues.

SHANE GIBSON/METRO NEWS

Two charged in late-night house party fight

We're co-operating, not merging: Grits and Greens

Manitoba parties insist talk is only about chances to work together

Manitoba Liberals and Green Party members were unusually tight-lipped Tuesday about plans they are making to work together.

The parties are looking at collaborating and working co-operatively, but are not talking about a formal merger right now, Liberal Leader Jon Gerrard said.

"We are not at this point talking about a merger. We are talking about what there is in terms of potential for inter-party co-operation, OK?" Gerrard said before cutting short an interview after four minutes.

"There are discussions ... in terms of our approaches to issues and how we can work together on them. I'm afraid I've got a call coming in. I'm going to have to break off."

Gerrard would not say whether that co-operation might extend to jointly nominating candidates in key constituencies for provincial elections, or agreeing not to run candidates against the other party in some areas.

A Liberal source said the merger idea came up last week at a board meeting.

"It was a fairly even split in the room between outright opposed and willing to consider," the source said Tuesday.

The Green Party also had little to say about talks Tuesday. Party leader James Beddome was not available for interviews. Vice-president Drew Fenwick issued a written statement and rejected an interview request.

"To date, we've had informal conversations with members of the Manitoba Liberal Party," Fenwick's statement said.

"It would be frankly unfair to either side to characterize these discussions as anything more than informal talks about inter-party co-operation."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Party seats

- The Liberals garnered 7.5 per cent of the popular vote and one seat in last October's election, while the Greens received 2.5 per cent of the vote and no seats.
- The Liberals had two seats and won 13 per cent of the popular vote in the 2003 and 2007 elections. Their numbers were even higher in the 1980s.
- The two parties have already held joint news conferences on environmental issues.

Fake US currency in Winnipeg

The RCMP is warning Winnipeggers to be wary of $100 U.S. bills after they say they've seen a jump in counterfeit notes floating around the city.

The force's Financial Integrity Unit said Tuesday both the public and businesses should be vigilant when accepting currency, noting anyone who handles cash should be educated on how to catch fake bills.

For more information about the security features of U.S. currency go to moneyfactory.gov and counterfeit prevention advice can also be found at bankofcanada.ca.

SHANE GIBSON

WIKIPEDIA

News in brief

Decorated rescue dog dies

A extraordinarily compassionate Rottweiler named Stinky that became the poster dog for Manitoba Search and Rescue Association has died.

The 11-year-old canine, which was the volunteer association's most famous and most decorated team member, died Monday of natural causes.

Her name came from an encounter with two skunks when she was a pup. Her work with traumatized soldiers led to her induction into the Purina Hall of Animal Fame in 2011. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Robocall probe leads to fake name

‘Pierre Poutine’ made calls to Edmonton-based RackNine, the Tory-linked firm at centre of scandal

Court documents show a cellphone in the robocalls affair was registered to Pierre Poutine of Separatist Street in Joliette, Que.

Elections Canada’s chief investigator says the clearly fake name was likely used to cover the tracks of whoever was behind misleading and harassing calls to voters in Guelph, Ont., in the last federal election.

Voters in Guelph reported getting calls from a phone number with a 450 area code directing them to the wrong polling station.

Elections Canada investigator Al Mathews obtained phone records showing the number behind the Guelph calls was the same one registered to “Pierre Poutine.”

The phone records also show the number registered to Pierre Poutine twice called Edmonton-based RackNine Inc., on April 30 and May 1.

The claims, which have not been proved in court, are laid out in an Information to Obtain a Production Order filed in an Edmonton court in November.

The records also show phones associated with Guelph Conservative candidate Marty Burke and the Guelph Conservative riding association made a total of 31 calls to RackNine between March 26 and early May.

RackNine has confirmed someone used its automated dialling service to make the phoney calls.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tory trouble

- The market-research industry’s watchdog is launching an investigation into a Tory pollster involved in an alleged misinformation campaign against Liberal MP Irwin Cotler.
- Campaign Research was behind a phone campaign last fall in Cotler’s Montreal riding, in which constituents complained they were falsely told their MP was about to or had resigned and that a byelection was imminent.

Report slams Tory crime bill

Restricting conditional sentences is going to cost the provinces and territories almost $140 million a year, produce fewer convictions and reduce the time offenders are under government supervision, says a report from the independent parliamentary budget officer.

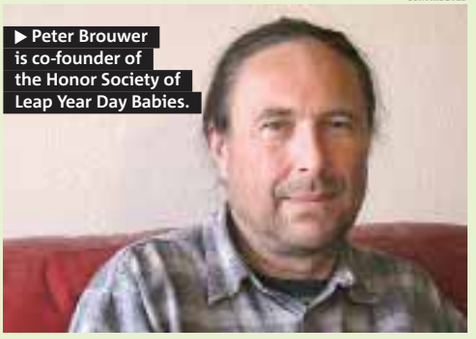
The 97-page study is a detailed and devastating critique of just one small aspect of the massive Conservative omnibus crime bill that is currently before the Senate.

Not only does the report predict a massive, unreported cost to provincial and territorial treasuries, it raises serious questions about the policy’s effectiveness.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson’s office did not directly dispute the report’s cost findings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CONTRIBUTED



▶ Peter Brouwer is co-founder of the Honor Society of Leap Year Day Babies.

‘LEAP DAY SHOULD BE AN OFFICIAL CELEBRATION’

Today, Peter Brouwer is celebrating his 14th birthday. No, Brouwer isn’t a precocious teenager who has overachieved in life — he’s a 56-year-old man who only gets to celebrate his birthday every four years. The Vancouver resident, like some five million others across the globe, was born on Leap Day, Feb. 29.

Brouwer set up the group so that “leapers” could “share their different experiences,” and, in some cases, the frustration caused by the whimsical date.

“This day celebrates the fact that our seasons can arrive on time and in sync every year,” Brouwer says. “The irony is that leap day is, yes, a chronological anomaly, but one that makes our calendar orderly. We should celebrate this.”

ANTHONY JOHNSTON/ METRO WORLD NEWS

Teen shooting suspect’s victims random

The teenage suspect in a school shooting that killed three students and wounded two didn’t know his victims and chose them randomly, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

Suspect T.J. Lane, 17, admitted firing 10 shots with a .22-calibre pistol Monday morning at Chardon High School, county prosecutor David Joyce said at a juvenile court hearing.

The hearing came hours after the death toll rose to three, and as schoolmates and townspeople grappled with the tragedy and wondered what could have set the gunman off.

Lane’s face twitched lightly while the prosecutor recounted the attack, and he sniffled and half-closed his eyes as he walked out of the room with deputies.

Lane’s custodial grandfather and two aunts joined him in court; the women reached over and lightly embraced the grandfather as the hearing began.

Judge Timothy Grendell ordered the boy, who is considered a juvenile, held for at least the next 15 days. Prosecutors have until March 1 to charge him.

The judge imposed a gag order on opposing attorneys at the prosecutor’s request and told the media not to photograph the boy’s face in court.

Shaken residents offered condolences and prayers to the families of those killed and wounded at 1,100-student high school in suburban Cleveland. All three of the dead were students, as are the two people wounded.

“This gets more tragic, the whole area is suffering, our prayers go up to God to give all strength, healing and closure,” said one of hundreds of Facebook postings on a memorial page.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARK DUNCAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ SWAT members leave Chardon High School in Ohio after a student opened fire inside the cafeteria on Monday.

Syria's envoy makes fast exit

He denounces a planned UN resolution as 'malicious and prejudiced' Then he storms out of meeting room

First, he delivered a fiery speech that accused the United Nations Human Rights Council of promoting terrorism in Syria and prolonging the nation's bloodshed.

Then he stormed out of the emergency UN meeting in Geneva.

All of which earned Fayssal al-Hamwi, Syria's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, a tongue-lashing.

The United States said he demonstrated the "delusional" nature of President Bashar Assad's regime.

"I think it's a reflection to some extent of what's going on with the Assad regime itself, holding a referendum that is farcical and a mockery of democratic processes when they're in the midst of a humanitarian crisis of their own creation," said Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, the U.S. representative to the 47-nation council.

The global body now says more than 7,500 people have died in Syria's turmoil since March.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tunisia's offer

- Tunisia's president, Moncef Marzouki, says he's ready to offer asylum to Syria's leader, Bashar Assad, in a bid to end the Syrian bloodshed.

RODRIGO ABD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ The victims can only marvel at the debris. Their house in Sarmin, Syria, was destroyed in clashes between the Free Syrian Army and President Bashar Assad's forces on Tuesday. Residents say at least 14 people were killed.

9-11 remains sent to landfill: Pentagon

The Pentagon says partial, incinerated remains of some Sept. 11 victims that could not be identified were sent to a landfill.

The remains were of some of those killed when a hijacked plane struck the Pentagon, killing 184, and another crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, killing 40.

The Pentagon released the report by an independent committee that was asked to examine practices at the military's mortuary at Dover, Del.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Earlier scandal

- News reports said some cremated partial remains of at least 274 American war dead were dumped in a Virginia landfill until the practice halted in 2008.

CANADIANS ABOARD

Disabled cruise ship gets food

Helicopters ferried food and flashlights to more than 1,000 people, including 14 Canadians, stuck aboard a disabled cruise ship.

The Costa Allegra was being towed to the Seychelles Islands on Tuesday through waters prowled by pirates.

Officials said the Costa Allegra could reach the Seychelles island of Mahe by late Wednesday or early Thursday.

The ship lost power Monday after a fire in its generator room knocked out the engines, lights and air conditioning.

The drama comes six weeks after sister ship Costa Concordia hit a reef and capsized off Italy, killing 25 people and leaving seven missing and presumed dead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

25,000 seeds sent to doomsday vault

Chick peas and fava beans are among 25,000 new samples being deposited this week in an Arctic seed vault built to protect food crops from wars and natural disasters.

The latest additions mean the Svalbard Global Seed Vault has now secured more than 740,000 samples since it opened in a remote Norwegian archipelago in 2008.

An official noted wars destroyed seed banks in Iraq and Afghanistan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Impregnable?

- The Svalbard vault — sometimes referred to as a doomsday vault — is designed to withstand global warming, quakes and even nuclear strikes.

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Picture. Screen

▶ A man walks past an advertisement for Apple's iPad 2 on Tuesday in Shanghai, China.

EUGENE HOSHIKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apple invite continues tablet tease

Apple is inviting reporters to an event next Wednesday in San Francisco. An image on the invite showing part of an iPad screen suggests the company will announce a new model. Unconfirmed reports have speculated a sharper screen and faster cellular broadband options could be part of the next model.

Google policy might violate EU data rules

Commission also examining whether Google uses its dominance to stop others from entering the EU market

Google's new privacy policy appears to violate the European Union's data protection rules, France's regulator said Tuesday, just two days before the new guidelines are set to come into force.

Google announced its new privacy policy with much fanfare last month. The rules, which are set to come into force on Thursday, regulate how the Web giant uses the enormous amounts of personal data its collects through its search engine, email and other services.

However, the EU's data protection authorities are concerned about the privacy effects of the policy and earlier this month asked French regulator CNIL to investigate them.

"Our preliminary analysis shows that Google's new policy does not meet the requirements of the European Directive on Data Protection," CNIL said in a letter to Google chief executive Larry Page.

The agency said Google's explanation of how it will use the data was too vague and difficult to understand "even for trained privacy professionals"

The new policy makes it easier for Google to combine the data of one person using different services such as the search engine, YouTube or Gmail if she is logged into her Google account. That allows Google to create a broader profile of that user and target advertising based on that person's interests and search history more accurately.

Google argues that combining the data into one profile also makes search results more relevant and allows a user to cross-navigate between different services more easily. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Microsoft to preview Windows 8 software

MARK RIGHTMIRE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ Windows president Steven Sinofsky

Since Microsoft released its Windows operating system in 1985, most of the sequels have been variations on the same theme. Not that it mattered much. Regardless of the software's quality, Microsoft managed to remain at the centre of the personal computing universe.

The stakes are much different as the company puts the finishing touches on Windows 8 — perhaps the most important piece of software the company has designed since co-founder Bill Gates won the contract to build the first operating system for IBM's personal computer in the early 1980s.

A beta version of the revamped operating system will be unveiled Wednesday in Barcelona, nudging Windows 8 a step closer to its anticipated mass market release in the fall. It's the most extensive look at Windows 8 since Microsoft released an early version of the system to developers five months ago.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Please donate this February at heartandstroke.ca and make death wait.
HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. TUESDAY

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas
+ 40.01 (12,740.47)	+ 0.38¢ (100.46¢ US)	- $2.01 US ($106.55 US)	$2.519 US (- 8.4¢ US)

Gold $1,788.40 US (+ $13.50 US)

Montreal gas prices spike by 14 cents

Energy industry experts are warning that the 14-cent per litre spike in gasoline prices in Montreal on Tuesday is just a taste of the high fuel costs Canadians can expect in the coming months.

The average pump price in Montreal was $1.44 a litre, compared with $1.30 a day earlier, according to price-tracking website Gasbuddy.com. By contrast, the Canadian average only rose a penny to $1.28. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Job prospects remain weak: Report

The Conference Board's forward-looking indicator on labour markets suggests job growth will continue to be modest in the upcoming months.

The think tank's help-wanted index for February shows a mixed climate for job seekers. Prospects appear stronger in the West, but weak throughout much of Ontario.

The index is one of the few forward-looking indicators for jobs in Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Greece passes new round of cuts

Greece's Parliament late on Tuesday approved new cuts in public-sector pensions and government spending required to secure a second package of international rescue loans.

Lawmakers voted 202-80 in favour of cutbacks worth $4.31 billion US and aimed at bringing the 2012 budget back in line with targets. Lawmakers from both parties in Prime Minister Lucas Papademos' coalition, the majority Socialists and the conservatives, backed the legislation.

Earlier, the debt-crippled country's Cabinet decided to apply recent labour reforms, including deep cuts to the minimum wage, retroactively to Feb. 14.

Greece is obliged to adopt a series of austerity measures and reforms before it can receive any funds from its new $174-billion package of rescue loans from other eurozone countries and the International Monetary Fund.

But more than two years of harsh austerity implemented to secure the rescue funds have taken a hefty toll on the recession-bound Greek economy, with unemployment at a record-high 21 per cent.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A protesting firefighter holds flares during a demonstration against the Greek government's austerity measures in Athens on Tuesday,

By the numbers

- The newly approved legislation imposes nearly $538 million US in cuts to already depleted pensions.
- Subsidies to the state health-care system will be cut by $673 million, and health-care spending on medicine will fall by $767 million.
- Furthermore, some $538 million will be lopped off defence spending — three-quarters of which will come from purchases.

IF YOU HAVE EVER QUESTIONED THE TERM 'DOWNWARD DOG,' READ ON

JUST SAYIN' ...

PAUL SULLIVAN
METRO

It's generally thought that things beginning in "yog" are good for you.

Like "yogurt" and "yoga" and "Yogi" (Berra, Bear, etc.).

But, it turns out, that's not always the case.

Yoga, for example, lost one of its shining stars recently as yogi John Friend, the founder of Anusara yoga — a kind of feel-good, hang-loose variation on the theme — resigned amid accusations that he felt too good and hung too loose.

Friend, the accusations go, wanted to be more than friends with an unusually large number of his female adherents, ran Wiccan covens featuring a variety of sexual activities, kept employees busy scoring marijuana on his behalf, and at one point even froze his employees' pensions.

"They may have to build a new wing onto The Bad Yogi Hall of Shame to shoehorn John Friend in with fellow philanderers ..."

So much for Mr. Nice Yogi.

The yoga community has been rocked and shocked by this scandal, and more than 50 Anusara teachers have rolled up their mats and left the ashram. But as a number of astute commentators have noticed, this is hardly the first time some guru has stepped out of line. They may have to build a new wing onto The Bad Yogi Hall of Shame to shoehorn John Friend in with fellow philanderers Swami Muktananda, Swami Satchidananda, Swami Amrit Desai and Swami Rama.

The problem may be that yoga (unlike yogurt) is inherently sexy. Hatha yoga, the form most practised around the world, started as a branch of Tantra, which is all about seeking spiritual bliss through sex. The movement to make it safe for a general audience didn't really take hold until the 20th century, so the sex is just under the surface, which should be obvious whenever you find yourself in the "downward dog" pose.

According to a usually reliable source — the New York Times — there is scientific evidence that yoga is inherently sexy. It causes an increase in testosterone (the guru sex hormone), sexy brain waves, and yoga's fast-breathing practice can increase blood flow through the genitals. Like Viagra.

At Rutgers University, researchers have found that yoga can be an effective form of mental masturbation, leading to spontaneous orgasm, or "thinking off." Don't try that with yogurt. (It doesn't work.)

So the real surprise is that there aren't more yoga-based shenanigans. The real surprise, considering the evidence, is that anyone is surprised. Add the power imbalance that often goes with these guru-groupie situations, and you have a surefire recipe for scandal.

Of course, millions of people who practise yoga and eat yogurt aren't looking for kicks. They just want improved flexibility and digestion.

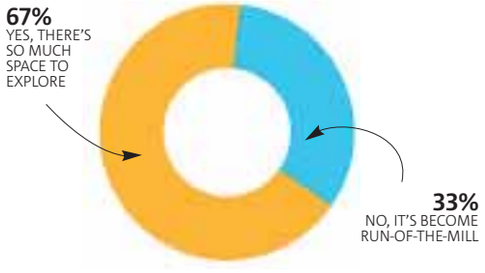
Sex with the guru improves neither.

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsaying

Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Are you excited by the finding of new planets?



Local tweets

- **@fechteliwrpep4:** my friend in Winnipeg: "it's actually been really warm this year. It's only like -20 lately"
- **@PyperJayne:** I've endeavored to keep my jeep clean this winter but I give up - you win #Winnipeg weather...you always do
- **@MattWill204:** #Winnipeg Cops are on the skywalks on Portage Ave looking for people using their phones. Then signaling the cop car to get you
- **@jaypoliver:** I think afternoon nap breath may be more potent than morning breath. Maybe this is why I live alone. lol #gross #winnipeg
- **@menace204:** Just watched a thug get thrown down for stealing some canned soup from Dollarama. #winnipeg
- **@AsaRehman:** called #KickinBurgers "@k_kosie Thinking its my #destiny to open an all-weather food truck in #Winnipeg. Soccer-themed burgers, @AsaRehman?"
- **@hallsy04:** That's a sick arena to get a win in. Congrats to Winnipeg fans for having a team finally, you definitely deserve it. #happyplane

Daily Zoom

LONDON NEWS PICTURES/REX FEATURES

London unoccupied

Occupy London camp removed

LONDON. A time for contemplation and reflection? A supporter of anti-capitalist movement Occupy London meditated in the remains of a partially dismantled tent in London on Tuesday morning. After being camped outside St. Paul's Cathedral for more than four months, demonstrators were evicted by police and bailiffs. MWN

"The relationships forged during these strange and beautiful four and a half months still have much further to run. This is only the beginning."
STATEMENT FROM WEBSITE OF OCCUPY THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE

Britain's protests

- **November 2010:** 55,000 students demonstrate over tuition fees.
- **December 2010:** Protesters target state buildings and damage a car carrying Prince Charles.
- **August 2011:** More than 2,800 people are arrested after a protest over a fatal shooting by police prompted rioting.
- **November 2011:** Occupy movement set up.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Occupy London activist

metro

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Films that take a leap

It's not every year we get an extra day to play Some filmmakers have based their movies around the magical Feb. 29 — telling leap year tales of love, ennui and ghosts

IN FOCUS

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

You may not be aware of this, but we're living in a bissextile year. What does that mean? Well, it means today's date, Feb. 29, didn't exist last year. Or the year before that. In fact, you have to flip the calendar back to 2008 to find the last time February had 29 days.

But how to celebrate the year's extra day? If you are Ja Rule, Antonio Sabato Jr., or Tony Robbins, all leap year babies, you could throw yourself a birthday party, but if not, why not rent or download (legally of course!) a movie about those rare years with 366 days?

The Amy Adams rom-com Leap Year is based on an old Irish legend that says that women can propose to men, but only on Feb. 29.

She travels to Ireland to ask for her longtime beau's hand, only to get sidetracked in Wales by a tall handsome stranger played by Matthew Goode.

You can likely guess the rest (and if you can't you need to go to romantic comedy school and learn how this works) but the proposal Amy finally gives is much different than the one she originally intended.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Amy Adams stars opposite Matthew Goode in Leap Year, a rom-com about an American who travels to Ireland to propose to her longtime beau on Feb. 29.

Also on the romantic side is The Leap Years, a Chinese film about a woman who meets her lover once every four years on, you guessed it, Feb. 29. The main character, Li-Ann, is played by three actresses. Beatrice Chia handles all the narration, Wong Li-lin ushers her through her 20s with Joan Chen playing her in middle age.

Rounding out our look at leap year movies are two films with nothing whatsoever to do with romance.

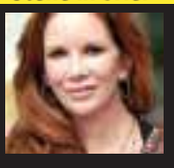
The strange and disturbing Ano Bisiesto was the first Mexican film to win the Camera D'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival. The story of a lonely woman (Monica del Carmen) who marks off the days on a calendar as she reveals her true self to her lover was called "a blind leap into the void of art-house cinema du extreme, South of the Border division" by Time Out but is also a deeply felt psychological drama.

On the scary side is The Curse of February 29, a Korean horror film about a blood stained bus ticket, a vengeful ghost and a leap year murder.

Leap years at the movies offers something for everyone — love, ennui and even ghosts!

2 scene

Scene in brief



Little House on the Prairie actress Melissa Gilbert, singer Gladys Knight and NFL player Donald Driver will be among the 12 celebrity contestants on the next season of Dancing With the Stars. Other famous faces participating in the show's 14th edition include The View co-host Sherri Shepherd and singer-songwriter Gavin DeGraw.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Meryl Streep donates $10K to school on behalf of hometown star Viola Davis

Portman married in secret to Millepied

Their jeweller confirms the pair had wedding bands made following Oscars

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

THE WORD

MONICA WEYMOUTH
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Natalie Portman is married — and didn't invite us

After showing up to the Academy Awards sporting suspicious rings, it seems that Natalie Portman and Benjamin Millepied did, indeed, get married without telling us.

Jeweler Jamie Wolf confirms that the couple — who met on the set of Black Swan and have a son together — created the wedding bands.

"I designed the rings worn by Benjamin Millepied and Natalie Portman," Wolf told Us-Magazine.com.

"I designed the rings worn by Benjamin Millepied and Natalie Portman. They were made with recycled platinum and conflict-free diamonds."
JEWELER JAMIE WOLF

"They were made with recycled platinum and conflict-free diamonds."

Their eco-friendly jeweler leaked the news?

This, friends, is what we call a rich people problem.

Becks still after more children

David and Victoria Beckham may be adjusting to having a fourth child with 7-month-old daughter Harper, but that doesn't mean they're necessarily done procreating.

"We might have one more or two more, you never know," David says, according to Hollyscoop. "We're not thinking about it yet, but if it happens, great. We're enjoying the kids as it is. It's always a thought."

And Victoria, who has complained recently about being exhausted from work and having a newborn, is still up for more.

"I'm not against having more children. I feel lucky having the kids I have and I guess I do like being pregnant," she says. "But definitely not just yet." METRO

▶ David Beckham

Talking points

Paltrow pegs Blue Ivy Carter as a performer

GWYNETH IS CLEARLY A PSYCHIC While Blue Ivy Carter is just seven weeks old, some of the adults in her life already have a career picked out for her.

"She is going to be an entertainer," Gwyneth Paltrow, who is pals with parents Beyoncé Knowles and Jay-Z, tells Hollywood Life. "She just has this glow around her like her mother. She's stunning. She has the most beautiful eyes." METRO

Sean Young booted from Governor's Ball

RELIVING PAST GLORIES. Blade Runner and Ace Ventura: Pet Detective star Sean Young was arrested after trying to sneak into the post-Oscars Governor's Ball Sunday night, according to TMZ.

The actress, who recently appeared on Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew, made it into the party initially and hobnobbed with the likes of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie before being asked to leave, as she didn't have a ticket for the event. Sources say she then tried to get back into the party, leading to an altercation with security personnel. Young was booked on a misdemeanor battery charge.
METRO

Uma Thurman pregnant again

ADDING TO THE FLOCK Uma Thurman is expecting a baby with financier Arpad Busson, her rep confirms to People magazine.

And while the actress wasn't necessarily ready to talk about her pregnancy, her friends were more than happy to.

"Yes, Uma is pregnant," a Thurman pal tells Life & Style.

"She hasn't announced it yet, but a lot of her friends were asking her, because they could tell the difference when they saw her at New York Fashion Week. She's usually so skinny, but now she has the cutest little bump and a glow about her."

Thurman also has two children with ex-husband Ethan Hawke.
METRO

Celebrity tweets

"Turns out I married a man who knows every word to every Neil Diamond song ever. This wasn't mentioned in the courting process."
@missjudygreer

"You'll chuckle at this. I just took a shower and I actually did at one point drop the soap."
@RealMattLucas

"random question what can i do to get rid of puffy eyes from crying? there is no way i am putting hemroid cream on my eyes!"
@MissKelly0

"Still getting dressed for Oscars."
@SteveMartinToGo

▶ Berlin Cathedral

4 great getaways

1 Berlin, Germany

Always on affordable travel lists, Berlin remains high because, this summer, the new Berlin Bradenburg Airport opens — and you may be able to find promotional flights there. After arriving, you'll find yourself in the East Village of New York, circa 1970s: the punk rockers are actually punk rockers, and the art is bold. By day, take in the history—you can walk along the Berlin Wall, or visit the Berlin Cathedral. By night, relive your techno glory days at places like Berghain/Panorama Bar, one of the best in all of Europe.

2 Nashville, Tenn.

Downtown Nashville is walkable (saving you transportation costs) and hotels are usually under $100 a night. That means you'll have more money to spend on entertainment. This is the place to see the big names (like Willie Nelson) or small ones, at venues such as Mercy Lounge (on hopping Cannery Row). There's usually a festival going on, too.

▶ Nashville

3 Paris, France

You already want to go. So go in August. The entire place clears out, and you'll find cheaper hotels, empty cafes and less queueing at museums. According to Woody Allen, walking around at midnight is fun, too.

▶ Paris

4 Costa Rica

Also known as "the holiday Americans take when they cannot afford Hawaii or the Bahamas," Costa Rica offers adventure without risk. Most locals speak English. It's close to the States. And everything from renting a car to booking a hotel costs far less than neighbouring islands. Yet you still come home with a tan. Check out visitcostarica.com to start planning today.

SAM CASTONE, METRO WORLD NEWS

3 life

Travel in brief

Organizers of a weeklong celebration of Ontario's burgeoning craft beer industry are hoping to attract visitors from outside the province to partake in the suds-soaked events. Hosted by 29 breweries, the third annual Ontario Craft Beer Week is planning hundreds of beer-themed activities across Ontario. The festival launches on Father's Day, running from June 17 to 23.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Miami's other 'wild' side

The Travellin' Canadian finds out there's more to Miami than just the night life and beaches

THE TRAVELLIN' CANADIAN

DARREN PARKMAN
TRAVEL@METRONEWS.CA

It turns out there's a little more to Miami than all night parties on south beach and endless days of baking in the sun. During my recent whirlwind jaunt to this sun drenched paradise, I found there is a way to slow the pace just long enough to smell the roses, and avoid those 'Sobe' hangovers. One of the surprising highlights of my visit turned out to be one of those tourist-trap style, stereotypical boat tours of Biscayne Bay.

It was just after arriving at the Miami Marina, I experienced one the coolest up close wildlife encounters ever. Now, I've been lucky enough to get up close with some strange creatures over the years, from web-toed platypuses in Australia, to giant Orangutans in Borneo, but even they were no more impressive than what greeted me right here in the wilds of downtown Miami, no less.

There they were ... milling around the docks ... a real live pair of giant, endangered and very blubbery Manatees. These gentle giants were just lazily floating on the surface, surrounded by downtown skyscrapers.

It was a bit strange to see them out of their natural habitat, as tourists flocked around them taking pictures.

My jet boat tour courtesy of Ocean Front adventures turned out to be no less impressive. Dolphins skipped alongside our boat as we passed a strange mix of natural east coast sea life in front of a collection of multimillion dollar mansions.

It was a bit weird to behold all this natural beauty as we roared by the waterfront of palaces of celebrities such as Rosie O'Donnell and Madonna, but hey, that's what Miami is all about.

Back on dry land, I chose gentler Coconut Grove over wild and crazy south beach, and was glad I did. The vibe in the "Grove" is decidedly more mellow and relaxed, with tons of laid back watering holes filled with friendly locals. Of course I needed to soak up those suds with some great food, and the funky Peacock Garden Café was just the ticket.

There's nothing like a great steak under the stars in the middle of winter. At the end of it all I felt as content as those blubbery manatees.

Southern fun

- **Do the South Beach strip:** It's an impressive display of trendy art deco bars and hotels, and tons of crazy partiers dancing on tables and paying high drink prices.
- **Visit the Florida keys:** Rent a car and journey down to stunning Key West. Nothing like digging into a piece of Key Lime pie at the southern most tip of the US.

DARREN PARKMAN/METRO NEWS

▶ Boat tours are a great way to see the more 'natural' side of Miami.

DARREN PARKMAN/METRO NEWS

▶ Manatees in the 'wilds' of Miami.

Over 600 cms/20 feet of snow to date.
Dear friends and family,
Awesome conditions in the BC Rockies, having lots of fun! It's been so worth it to just book the time off work and school to have a break.
We skied the new lift to Polar Peak today. Spectacular Rocky Mountain views, you must get out here this season. Lots of events planned in Fernie for March and April - Griz Days, Family Carnival and an 80's Weekend!
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Young? Broke?

If so, a new travel website caters to you Off Track Planet is meant to connect "independent youth"

CASSANDRA GARRISON
TRAVEL@METRONEWS.CA

Ever wish you knew which countries are best for cheap volunteer gigs? Or, what is Bunny Chow?

Freddie Pikovsky and his small, but well-travelled team of three other full-time staffers, have set out to answer those questions with the launch of Off Track Planet (OTP), a blog and magazine aimed at young explorers on a budget.

The Brooklyn-based publication is now in its fourth print issue, but you can enjoy it online, too. Metro caught up with Pikovsky, co-founder and CEO of OTP, to hear about the trip that inspired it all, why it's easier to hire younger writers and what it means to be young, sexy and broke.

How was OTP born?

Four years ago, I took my first trip abroad. I started in Israel and made my way through Western Europe to Greece, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. It was life-changing to see how other people lived their lives. I came home to L.A. and I was on a mission to inspire other people to travel the world because I felt it would create positive change to see life through others. I realized there was nothing connecting independent youth travel to an audience, so I decided to come up with something edgy and truthful. I moved to NYC, where I spent my first year living and working at a youth hostel in Brooklyn, then began to develop a team.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ The founders

What is the "young, sexy and broke" theme all about?

I qualify anybody who is young to be automatically sexy. Broke means you might still be living off your parents or you're not able to afford luxury cruises and five star hotels. You want to do it and you can, but in a fashion that is very low budget. A lot of the topics are about sex culture and party culture around the world. It's easy to say we're edgy, but we are trying to get their attention and the way we relate is that we are truthful about what's at the top of the list when you're a young traveller.

CONTRIBUTED

What kind of information can travellers expect to find in Off Track Planet?

We do tips and advice, best destinations on a budget — not just destinations for budget travellers, but we will talk about going to expensive places on a budget. We write about the sexiest people from different countries, movies you should see before you travel to a country and how to haggle.

What has the response from readers been like?

People love us because we are so honest. We are taking traditional travel writing and turning it upside down in the sense that most writers typically paint a very beautiful picture. We like to be more risky and very upfront and honest because that's what this generation really responds to.

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Drink of the week

Orange Pear Refresher

Colourful and refreshing, this drink will cool your palate and leave a citrus flavour.

- 3 tbsp (45 mL) fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) simple syrup
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) pear infused vodka
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) sparkling orange beverage

Fill tall glass with ice and pour in lemon juice, vodka and simple syrup. Top with orange beverage and serve. Garnish with lemon wedge and fresh mint.

SAN PELLEGRINO ARANCIATA

Pasta: The next generation

Put aside granny's traditional meatballs and sauce and try this unique take on a favourite comfort dish The caramelized onions in this pasta are slow cooked to intensify the flavour

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This recipe serves eight.

When it comes to weeknight dinners, sometimes the shortest route is the long way around.

Which is to say, letting the slow cooker chug away while you are away often is the fastest and easiest way to get a great dinner on the table during your evening rush.

A common complaint about slow cooker recipes is that too many of them require either too much planning or too much prepping (and sometimes cooking) of ingredients before they go into the cooker. Busy people want recipes that let them dump stuff in, then walk away and forget about it until dinner.

That's where this simple, but over-the-top-good recipe comes in. You let the slow cooker perfectly caramelize a whole mess of onions while you are at work for the day. When you come home, you toss those with a few other ingredients and in the time it takes you to boil pasta, you have dinner.

A food processor is the easiest way to slice this volume of onions. And you also could do that the night before, then bag them and toss them in the refrigerator until the next morning so all you have to do is empty them into the slow cooker.

As for the sun-dried tomatoes and arugula, you can improvise according to your family's tastes.

Any vegetables or cooked meats can be substituted. Sausage even could be added to the slow cooker in the morning.

Creamy Caramelized Onion Pasta

Using your slow cooker to cook onions will give you a delicious and sweet flavour of caramelized onions, and you can do so many at one time! Use them for this creamy pasta dish or make them on their own to create other delicious dishes.

Preparation:

1. In a large slow cooker, combine onions and olive oil. Stir well to coat, then cover and cook on High for 6 to 8 hours or until well browned and caramelized.
2. In large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta for about 9 minutes or until tender but firm. Drain well and return to pot. Add onions, creme fraiche, arugula and sun-dried tomatoes. Stir over medium heat for about 2 minutes or until arugula just begins to wilt. Season with salt and pepper to taste. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS (PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE VISIT, EMILYRICHARDSCOOK.CA)**

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg (3 lb) onions, thinly sliced
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) olive oil
- 500 g (1 lb) fettuccine pasta
- 1 tub (250 g/8 oz) creme fraiche
- 1 container (142 g/5 oz) baby arugula
- 250 ml (1 cup) thinly sliced sun-dried tomatoes
- Salt and ground black pepper

Get creative with your pasta by using ghee, a form of clarified butter It heightens the flavour of ingredients

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ravioli with Fried Sage, Asparagus and Walnuts

This recipe serves four.

This recipe uses ghee, butter that was heated until the milk solids separated from the liquid. Then it was heated some more, until the liquid evaporated and the solids began to brown.

The result is a thick yellow-brown paste with a nutty and intensely — are you ready? — buttery flavour. But it's true; this is butter on steroids.

The asparagus and walnuts pair perfectly with the sage and ghee in this recipe, but don't hesitate to mix it up.

Almonds and cauliflower florets would be great, as would lightly chopped pistachios and baby bella mushrooms.

The pinch of red pepper flakes doesn't add much heat; it just helps heighten the other flavours. But if you like your dinner with punch, up your pinch.

Preparation:

1. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the ravioli and cook according to package directions, then drain and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt the ghee. Add the red pepper flakes and sage leaves, then fry until the sage is crisp.
3. Remove the sage from the pan and set aside. Return the pan to the heat and add the asparagus. Sauté until just tender, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. Add the walnuts, toss well, then add the drained ravioli and toss again. Crumble the fried sage leaves into the dish, then season with salt and pepper. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS (PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE VISIT, EMILYRICHARDSCOOK.CA)**

Ingredients:

- 284-gram (10-ounce) package fresh cheese ravioli
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) ghee
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 5 large fresh sage leaves (left whole)
- 1 bunch asparagus, bottoms trimmed, cut into 5-cm (2-inch) lengths
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) toasted walnuts, lightly chopped
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste

When the chief has changed

You've settled into your role at work when suddenly there's a switch in management Here's how to start over

CHELSEA NEWTON
TALENTEGG.CA

ISTOCK

▶ Your new boss will likely lead your team in a different way as the last. Embrace this new environment.

Many students and recent grads look to their managers to set the tone for their current and future working relationships.

There is comfort in having worked for a manager for a period of time — they know the way you think, they trust in your abilities, and they know the best way to coach you.

So how do you start all over again when you get a new manager?

It's a scary time, but also a great opportunity to grow your skills and be challenged by a new perspective.

It's very important for student and entry-level employees to be open, build credibility, and want the new reporting line to work.

Here are some tips if you have a new manager.

1 **Come in open minded** Your new manager is likely to operate differently than the last, so you should seek to understand their perspective. Don't make snap judgments.

2 **Ask questions** This is tied to not making quick decisions or judgments. Ask questions to seek understanding about changes your new manager is making if they aren't giving you the rationale or background.

3 **Deliver results** Delivering results with a great attitude is the best way to build your personal credibility with a new manager.

4 **Be open and transparent** Open conversation and transparency will work well on both sides to create a strong working relationship right from the get-go. Good luck!

the transition

If possible, speak with your current manager about the transition they are completing with your new manager before it takes place.

If you had an open relationship with your previous manager, you can help shape this discussion by highlighting key things that really work in your current relationship.

If your current manager is unable to have a transition with your new manager, take matters into your own hands. Put together a "get to know me" email with your job description, org chart of your team (if applicable), previous performance review, and current targets and goals. Book a meeting with your new manager to get to know each other, walk through your current work load and review your goals.

CHELSEA NEWTON IS THE DIRECTOR OF TALENT ACQUISITION AT MOSAIC SALES SOLUTIONS. HER EXPERTISE IS IN HIRING YOUNG ADULTS AND SHE HAS BUILT CAMPUS RECRUITING PROGRAMS IN OVER 12 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, CHINA AND RUSSIA.

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4 sports

JOHN GRIESHOP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Rick Nash scores a goal against Joey MacDonald in a 5-2 loss to the Red Wings on Tuesday night.

‘That was the best thing for the team’

Nash says he asked for trade from Blue Jackets to help with rebuilding

Rick Nash had difficulty sleeping on Monday night, after it became known that he had asked the Columbus Blue Jackets to trade him.

After spending nine seasons as the face of a losing franchise, Nash is now uncertain of the reaction from fans who have idolized him but now might see him as just another opportunist.

“I’m not too sure what to expect,” he said Tuesday in his first public comments after it was revealed he had asked to be dealt. “I’ve been with these fans my whole career here. I love them no matter what. They’re a great fan base, loyal. They’ve been patient with this organization and with this team. No matter what the reception is I’ll always have a soft spot in my heart for our fans.”

Fan reaction

When Rick Nash was introduced before Tuesday’s game against Detroit game, fans in Columbus responded with mostly cheers with a few boos mixed in.

General manager Scott Howson first mentioned Nash’s trade request on Monday, shortly after he failed to trade the four-time All-Star.

“He obviously wants a change,” said Howson, who was first approached by Nash in January about being moved.

Most people had thought the team, with the worst record by far in the NHL at 18-37-7, had first floated the possibility of dealing its best player. So it was a shocker that it was Nash, who has long said how much he loves Columbus and the Blue Jackets, who wanted out.

Nash was adamant — repeating the same phrase several times — that he not only wanted to help his own career but also help the organization that drafted him No. 1 and helped him become one of the top stars in the NHL.

“I was informed by management that there was a rebuild, a reshape, in the team and I personally felt I could be a huge part of that towards bringing assets in,” he said. “In my view, that was the best thing for the team, the organization, and personally for my career.”

One major problem will be building a team around a captain who has already said he’d prefer to be elsewhere.

He said he wanted to remain as captain, at least for the final 20 games of this season. Team officials gave no indication that he would lose the “C” on his jersey. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Urine collector defends himself

The person who collected Ryan Braun’s urine sample that tested positive for elevated levels of testosterone said he followed the collection program’s protocol.

Dino Laurenzi Jr. issued a statement Tuesday confirming he handled the sample submitted following a playoff game on Oct. 1.

He says he has been a collector for Comprehensive Drug Testing since 2005 and has taken more than 600 samples for Major League Baseball’s drug-testing program.

“At no point did I tamper in any way with the samples,” Laurenzi said.

Laurenzi’s name emerged last week after the NL MVP’s 50-game suspension was overturned, making Braun the first big leaguer to successfully challenge a drug-related penalty in a grievance.

Laurenzi said he stored Braun’s sample in his basement in accordance with CDT’s protocol because there was “no FedEx office located within 50 miles of Miller Park that would ship packages that day or Sunday.”

Braun, however, has said at least five FedEx locations within 5 miles were open until 9 p.m. and there also was a 24-hour location.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

News that hockey great Jean Beliveau was hospitalized following a stroke has prompted an outpouring of affection and get-well wishes for the legendary centreman, beloved as much for his gracious personality as his graceful skating.

Even the prime minister wished Beliveau well.

“Mr. Beliveau is a great Canadian and a remarkable ambassador for our national sport,” Stephen Harper said in an emailed statement.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wade to Kobe: Sorry I broke your nose

Insisting he meant no harm, Dwyane Wade revealed Tuesday that he has apologized to Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant multiple times for a blood-drawing, nose-breaking foul during the All-Star game.

The first of those apologies, Wade said, came during the game when he saw Bryant’s face had been bloodied. Wade also said he sent the Lakers’ star a message after the game in Orlando, Fla. on Sunday night.

Wade said critics who questioned why he never offered an apology for the play — the likes of which seemed to be something not typical in an All-Star game setting — simply made incorrect assumptions.

“I don’t care what I’m portrayed as,” Wade said after Miami’s first practice following the league’s All-Star break. “It’s unfortunate, obviously. I don’t want to ever hurt anybody in this game, especially on a freak play like that. It’s unfortunate. I send my apologies. But it’s not intentional. If it’s something I did intentionally, it’d be a different story.”

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scan code for more sports.

LEAFS LOSE TO PANTHERS

Fans call for Wilson to be fired

Another season is slipping away from the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Mike Santorelli scored twice Tuesday as the Florida Panthers handed the sinking Maple Leafs a 5-3 loss, an all-too-familiar outcome for fans in Toronto.

Loud chants of “Fire Wilson!” — directed at coach Ron Wilson — went up twice during the third period as the Leafs lost for the ninth time in 10 games, including all four on a disheartening homestand. Toronto sits four points out of playoff position in the Eastern Conference but it is showing no signs of pulling out of a tailspin.

Marcel Goc, Jason Garrison and Stephen Weiss also scored for Florida (30-20-12). Jose Theodore added 28 saves.

Phil Kessel, Nikolai Kulemin and Joffrey Lupul replied for the Maple Leafs (29-27-7).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Motor and battery

The 107-kilowatt (143-horsepower) motor directs its 184 pound-feet of torque to the front wheels for a maximum 134 km/h through a single-speed transmission.

The lithium-ion battery pack is located beneath and behind the rear seat that, due to its bulk, cuts down on the hatchback's available stowage space while adding significant heft.

Cabin

The cabin features considerable advanced technology. There's a special version of the MyFord Touch information system that includes battery-charging state, expected remaining range and how much energy is being consumed by the vehicle's accessories.

There's more. At the end of every trip, the display screen shows total distance driven and the additional distance gained through regenerative braking. Put simply, when you brake, the battery pack is being charged.

Range

To maintain the battery pack at its optimum operating temperature, Ford uses a liquid heating and cooling system to help the car deliver on its 160-kilometre-range claim — maximum range, not average — but that will still require a light touch of the pedal and avoiding excessive use of electrical accessories such as the climate control.

And who knows what kind of range you'll get in a good old-fashioned Canadian winter.

▶ There's no explanation why the battery pack is in the back and the charge port is at the front, other than it's close to the driver's door and in plain sight.

Focusing on an electric

MALCOLM GUNN
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA
WHEELBASE MEDIA

Trading fossil-fuel fill-ups for electrical current flowing from a charging station is still a new idea, but Ford is providing a way for you to get in on the ground floor.

Unlike the Chevrolet Volt, Nissan Leaf and Mitsubishi iMiEV that are all proprietary designs, Ford developed the new Focus Electric using the existing Focus platform and body, although a distinctive nose and a charging port door on the driver's-side front fender are dead giveaways as to the car's unique propulsion. And it's that system — moreover, the way it charges — that makes the Focus Electric unique.

Ford claims that a full charge will require three to four hours, or about half the time required by the benchmark Nissan Leaf.

This is due to circuitry designed for higher throughput as opposed to significant differences in battery design. Three hours is a relatively short amount of time that also requires a 240-volt charging station. Otherwise, you can count on a lengthy 18-20 hours from a standard 120-volt outlet using a cord that's included, which is clearly not the way to go for busy or impatient people. A quick calculation puts the cost of driving 100 kilometres at about $2.

That's about half of what even the best hybrid can do and there's no tailpipe emissions at all with the Focus Electric.

5 drive

By comparison

Nissan Leaf
Base price: $40,400
Roomy hatchback gets high marks for functionality, if not for elegance.

Chevrolet Volt
Base price: $43,000
Backup gasoline generator makes this electric the most practical.

Mitsubishi iMiEV
Base price: $34,700
Small, good range, OK top speed and the cheapest big-name electric.

WHEELBASE MEDIA

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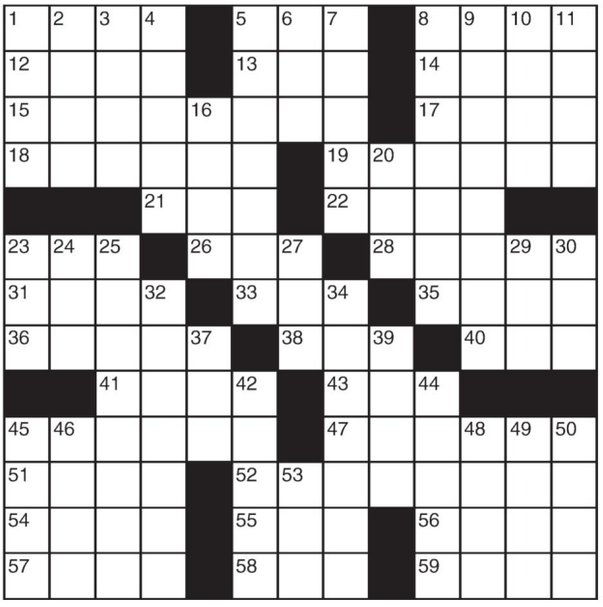
Crossword



Across

1 Syringe, for short
5 TiVo, for example
8 iPhone downloads
12 Really long time
13 Midafternoon, on a sundial
14 Crooner Jerry
15 Firm adherent to a cause
17 Ontario neighbor
18 Scabbard
19 Stocking holder
21 Apiece
22 Kill
23 Swiss mountain
26 Treasure seeker's aid
28 Spry
31 Water vessel
33 "Golly!"
35 Oklahoma city
36 Hannah Montana portrayer Miley
38 Pismire
40 Bygone Pontiac muscle car
41 Walked (on)
43 Stomach
45 Actress Headly
47 Frightened
51 Continental coin
52 Bit
54 Have coming
55 Peculiar
56 Reedy
57 Seeks restitution
58 Pirouette pivot
59 Spud's buds

Down

1 Chance occurrences
2 "Why not?"
3 Sweat outlet
4 Available
5 Symbol of limpness
6 By way of
7 "Lord of the —"
8 Par
9 Whooping it up
10 Ballet bend
11 Prognosticator
16 Detail
20 Chicken — king
23 "The View" network
24 Myrna of Hollywood
25 Path-filled garden
27 Shooter ammo
29 Torched
30 Tokyo's old name
32 Strong likes
34 Fencing call
37 Bart, to Homer
39 Clump of grass
42 Station
44 Hackneyed
45 The Bee —
46 Hawaiian feast
48 Needing liniment
49 Nastase of tennis lore
50 Lairs
53 Fuss

▶ Yeterday's answer

W	A	L	L	■	V	E	G	■	C	L	A	P
A	L	I	A	■	I	D	A	■	A	I	D	E
V	A	M	P	I	R	E	S	■	M	E	A	N
E	R	E	■	M	E	N	■	S	P	U	R	N
■	■	■	Q	U	O	■	D	E	F	■	■	■
B	O	G	U	S	■	P	R	A	I	S	E	D
A	R	I	A	■	J	O	Y	■	R	O	M	E
T	A	N	G	L	E	D	■	B	E	L	O	W
■	■	■	M	A	T	■	H	R	S	■	■	■
R	E	M	I	X	■	D	U	O	■	E	M	U
H	A	I	R	■	H	O	T	W	I	R	E	S
E	S	N	E	■	A	R	C	■	V	I	S	E
A	Y	E	S	■	M	A	H	■	Y	E	A	R

Sudoku

5			3		2			9
4	7	1				3	2	8
		2	9		3	7		
3								2
		9	4		5	6		
9	2	6				8	7	4
1			8		7			5

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

9	8	7	2	3	6	4	1	5
4	1	3	7	8	5	9	6	2
2	6	5	9	1	4	8	3	7
1	3	2	4	5	7	6	9	8
6	7	4	3	9	8	2	5	1
8	5	9	6	2	1	7	4	3
7	9	8	5	4	3	1	2	6
3	4	6	1	7	2	5	8	9
5	2	1	8	6	9	3	7	4

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, at metronews.ca/kiss.

my everlasting love, prince charming, My sweet darling, Ti amo, Je t'aime, Wo Ai Ni, I love you always, forever and ever. Mi Manchi every day and every night! Sweetheart, take good care of yourself, just a kiss on yr sweet lips my love, you are my everything, you are my destiny... See you always in my dreams tonite and every nite... **YOUR ETERNAL LOVE, STRONG N FAITHFUL PRINCESS**

boy at the salad bar
Hey you! That's right. I don't even know your name but i've been admiring you from a far :(I work in the store across from yours , so please look over sometime and just say hi ! :) **GIRL NEXT DOOR**

Honeypot
To my brand new husband, I love you and I am so happy to be on this wonderful journey with you. Thank you for everything.
HONEY BALL

A look at the weather

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Min -8° Max -1°	Min -7° Max -3°	Min -10° Max -3°

Jenna Khan, Weather Specialist
"Weather impacts everything we do. Providing the information you need before you head out that door and take on the day is the best part of my morning." **WEEKDAYS 5:30 AM**

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20
Today's good news will make you feel a lot better about your financial situation. Always be positive.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21
What happens today will inspire you to give a project you have been on the verge of ending another go. It can be made to work.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21
What you see or hear today will remind you that compared to other people, you are quite lucky.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22
Do you believe in yourself? The only thing that is holding you back, Cancer, is the idiotic idea that you are not good enough. You are.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23
There's no point trying to predict how people are going to act because they are on a completely different wavelength to you.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22
You seem very positive in your outlook at the moment, which is good, but you still need to back it up with hard work.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23
Good news regarding your money situation will cheer you up, but it's only a short-term development.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22
Listen to what friends have to tell you today, even if it isn't what you were hoping to hear.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 Do something out of the ordinary today, something even your friends think is outrageous.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20
You will see something that everyone else has missed. Act quickly and turn it to your advantage.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18
News from afar may not exactly delight you but neither is it the end of the world. Keep things in perspective and look for ways to benefit.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20
Someone you meet on your travels could become the most important person in your life over the next few months. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Caption contest

DAVID SMITH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MICHAEL CONROY/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in Wednesday's Metro.

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HIGHLIGHTS

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Participants will make a 6 inch by 6 inch fused glass window plus 2 pendants that can be hung on a necklace
- Includes all materials. Stand and necklace not included
- Professional studio setting
- Fun way to spend spring break

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